7th February 1924]

Finance.

Non-gazetted public servants.

184 *Q.*—Khan Bahadur HAJI ABD-UL-LAH HAJI QASIM SAHIB Bahadur: Will the hon. the Member for Finance be pleased to state—

(i) the number of houseless indigent non-gazetted public servants including local and municipal; and

(ii) if the Government have no information on the subject, whether the Government will be pleased to get the necessary statistics from all the districts?

A.—(i) The Government have no information as to the number of public servants who own no houses. They can only say that the rules provide for the grant of advances for building them and that the extent to which advantage is taken of these rules is small. Indigence is a matter of degree. If the hon. Member fixes the salary which he regards as connoting indigence, he will be able to prepare from the Civil Budget Estimate figures of the number of officers who derive incomes of less than the limit fixed from the Government.

(ii) The Government see no object in collecting statistics as to the extent to which public servants, who by the nature of their work cannot always live in their native districts, are in possession of houses either there or elsewhere.

Government Press.

185 *Q.*—Mr. M. RATNASWAMI: Will the hon. the Member for Finance be pleased to furnish information as to the kinds of high class printing work done at the Government Press which require the retention of a highly-paid European staff?

A.—The hon. Member appears to assume, first, that the rate of salary paid to the supervising officers in the Government Press is high, secondly, that it is high because the officers are Europeans, and thirdly, that European supervision is necessary only for high class printing work. None of these assumptions is correct. The rates paid are less than those paid in private firms. Europeans are employed because it has been found impossible after advertisement to secure men with the necessary training in India. The simplest as well as the most complex printing work can be high class or low class. In other words the simplest impression, if wrongly taken, may result in ruining the fount of type from which it is taken. The Government have reason to believe that the work of all classes done in the Government Press will be found to compare favourably in respect of its execution with work done elsewhere in India.

Mr. M. RATNASWAMI:—"May I ask the Government whether in private firms, like Messrs. Hoe & Co., and others the same kind of printing work as is done in the Government Press is not done and, if so, whether these private firms also require the European supervision that is required by the Government Press?"

The hon. Sir CHARLES TODHUNTER:—"I believe, Sir, that, generally speaking, that is the case. I cannot disclose any information I have about the concerns of any particular firm."